

# Football Rules Committee Meets to Consider Radical Changes in the Playing Rules of the Game

## HOW NUMBER OF PLAYS VARY IN GRIDIRON GAME

Parke H. Davis Gives Statistics to Prove Wide Differences.

CONDITIONS TO DECIDE Weather, Style of Attack and Speed of Referee Are Factors.

By PARKE H. DAVIS.

A matter that came up yesterday before the Intercollegiate Football Rules Committee and which is particularly interesting to the general football public was the proposition of Harry R. Coffin of the class of 1894 of Harvard University, who suggested that a football game should consist of four periods, each period limited to forty plays, and that as heretofore of four periods, each divided into fifteen minutes of playing time. Mr. Coffin's proposition was met with a great deal of interest, and he was met by asserting that under the present system of four fifteen minute periods there has been a decided variation in the number of plays to a period. Teams that have been ahead in the score are charged with exhausting the time by wasting it in order to lessen the number of opportunities for the other team to tie or to win. Mr. Coffin also has charged that games vary in number of plays, according to the officials—particularly referees—who have charge of the game.

Mr. Coffin is one of a little band of statisticians who are not content to see a game played solely before their eyes, but who increase their enjoyment of the contest by keeping a chart record of the game. I, too am one of this little band. For many years I have been in the habit of recording by a system of football symbols each play in a major contest and I have my records still preserved. Many football men have written to me in the last few weeks to produce these records and apply them to Mr. Coffin's interesting proposition. I take great pleasure in responding for the good of the sport in this public manner.

Mr. Coffin defines as a play an action which takes place from whistle to whistle. My idea of a play is entirely different. For instance, as often occurs, suppose that Harvard punts the ball. Yale catches and runs with the ball, and then fumbles, and Harvard recovers the ball. In this chain of action from whistle to whistle we have a punt, a catch, a run, a fumble and a recovery, with the ball changing sides three times. Therefore, we have five plays instead of one from whistle to whistle. According to my system of tabulation the plays of football are a kick, a run with the ball, a fumble and a recovery, a punt, a complete forward pass, an intercepted forward pass, a run from an intercepted pass play, a kick run back, a blocked kick a recovery of a blocked kick, a run for a recovery of a blocked kick, a fumble, a recovery of a fumble and a punt. In tabulation, I, of course, differentiate plays in the above classifications, as, for instance, a kick may be a punt, a drop kick or a place kick, and so on.

### Number of Plays Vary.

Mr. Coffin is correct in asserting that the number of plays in a game vary substantially. For instance, the Harvard-Princeton game of 1915 presented only 112 plays, whereas the Princeton-Yale game in the preceding fall produced 248 plays. Ordinarily, in the major games, the competing teams will run off approximately 50 plays in each quarter. The variation is due chiefly to natural and wholly proper causes, although at times a team will depress the number of plays by deliberately playing slowly. If the weather conditions are bad, presenting a soft ground and a wet ball, I have found that the number of plays will slow up about five plays to the quarter. If a team employs forward passes and these become incomplete, thus requiring the players to straggle back to the original position, the plays similarly will be depressed in number. The same result occurs during a punting attack. While the point itself is a fast play, the necessity of waiting for the slow moving men to come down the field and line up makes the play as a whole a slow play. In ordinary games each side punts about eight times in each quarter. If punts run over this number we invariably will find the total number of plays to lessen at the rate of one play for each punt. Long end runs also tend to lessen the number of plays in a game.

### The Part the Referee Plays.

Mr. Coffin cites the plays of the famous referee, William S. Langford, and notes that the number of plays in his games have a total less than those of other referees. This, however, is merely an incident in the games. Both Mr. Langford and Mr. Tutts are extraordinarily clever football referees and are as fleet-footed as they are keen-minded, always up with the play and equal in speed to any player. In fact, I recall distinctly a feature of the run of Sanford B. White of Princeton, against Harvard in 1916. White, it will be recalled, picked up the ball on Harvard's 10-yard line, and with flashing speed raced to Harvard's goal line pursued by the fast Harvard players. When White picked up the ball, William S. Langford was ten or 15 or 20 yards to the side. Although Mr. Langford had graduated twenty years before that game was played, probably in the same year in which Sanford White and some of those players were born, Mr. Langford not only kept pace with Sanford White, but actually beat him to Harvard's goal line.

Teams of course "stall" and they can "stall" under Mr. Coffin's system equally as well as under the present arrangement. If a team should be ahead in the score and desired to "stall" by depleting the number of plays, all it would have to do after it obtained the ball would be to have the center snap the ball to the quarterback and the quarterback to snap the ball to the spot for a down. This stalling form is the defect in Mr. Coffin's system.

Another matter—disconnected with the subject, but interesting—which ap-

## Table Showing Number of Plays In Twenty Football Games, 1913 to 1919

By PARKE H. DAVIS.

	Year.	First.	Second.	Third.	Fourth.	Total.
Harvard vs. Princeton.....	1913	45	46	46	40	177
Harvard vs. Yale.....	1913	41	51	40	40	172
Princeton vs. Michigan.....	1914	45	50	49	56	201
Harvard vs. Yale.....	1914	39	55	42	47	183
Dartmouth vs. Princeton.....	1914	23	48	50	61	212
Cornell vs. Pennsylvania.....	1914	49	69	48	55	221
Harvard vs. Princeton.....	1914	49	52	42	49	192
Princeton vs. Yale.....	1914	52	59	53	50	214
Harvard vs. Yale.....	1915	61	64	65	58	248
Army vs. Navy.....	1915	51	60	55	54	220
Harvard vs. Princeton.....	1915	54	42	40	40	176
Harvard vs. Yale.....	1915	47	53	52	54	206
Princeton vs. Yale.....	1916	54	57	54	46	211
Harvard vs. Yale.....	1916	29	41	58	48	211
Dartmouth vs. Princeton.....	1916	52	50	55	48	211
Princeton vs. Yale.....	1916	48	48	43	51	190
Army vs. Navy.....	1919	48	60	45	45	198
Harvard vs. Princeton.....	1919	42	45	50	56	193
Harvard vs. Yale.....	1919	42	53	43	47	185
Princeton vs. Yale.....	1919	47	42	51	50	190

pears from our statistics is the time consumed by actual play in the present system. At repeated intervals football is attacked by reformers who contend that the long, grueling quarters are injurious. The truth is that in any period of four minutes there is a great deal of action. The Harvard-Michigan contest of 1914 and the Harvard-Yale game of 1916 are the only games in my experience which failed to produce at least forty plays in any quarter.

During the past three years the rules committee has not met. During these three years, however, the game has been tested by college teams and especially by the service teams, and it has stood the test. The public has become expert in its rules and plays, and both players and spectators have been satisfied with the game. Why, then, plunge into a radical experiment?

quarter of the Harvard-Yale game of 1916, thirty-nine, was explained at the time as due to a mistake in keeping the time, which shortened the period several minutes. The Harvard-Michigan contest of 1914 and the Harvard-Yale game of 1916 are the only games in my experience which failed to produce at least forty plays in any quarter.

### OLYMPIC TRAP TEAM NOT YET SELECTED

Competition to Make Team Open to All Shooters.

That he has not picked the trapshooting team which will represent the United States at the Olympic Games in Antwerp next July and that final selection will be deferred as long as possible in order to select the country's best shooters, were stated in a message to American Trapshooting Association headquarters to-night from Jay Clark, Jr., of Worcester, Mass., captain of the team.

He declared that competition to make the team is open to every shooter regardless of his means, several erroneous reports having been circulated that shooters would be asked to pay their own expenses. Funds will be raised to send the team to Antwerp, he said.

### CLARK CALLED ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT

scores made under adverse weather conditions here will receive greater consideration than those made under ideal conditions, inasmuch as the Olympiad shooting will be held on scheduled time regardless of weather.

Clark, who has been empowered by the association to pick the team and to make all arrangements for the European trip, will confer with other members of the Olympic committee here tomorrow.

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## E. K. HALL HEADS FOOTBALL BODY

Collegiate Committee Begins Lengthy Session on Changes in the Rules.

The Football Rules Committee representing fourteen of the biggest colleges of the East and West, met last night at the Biltmore Hotel to consider the suggestions, plans and other numerous propositions offered by experts here and there for the improvement of the game among the collegiate institutions throughout the United States. The task proved to be so stupendous that it was impossible to straighten out the mass of matter on the playing rules, so no definite news as to the deliberations will be made known until this afternoon.

Chairman E. K. Hall of Dartmouth, who has held the post since the last meeting three years ago, presided, and it was proposed for another term, and that turned out to be the only business transacted. Others present were Walter Camp, Yale secretary; J. A. Babbitt, Harvard; C. W. Savage, Oberlin; Dr. Harry L. Williams, Minnesota; W. A. Lambeth, Virginia; Capt. V. E. Fritchard, West Point; Dr. Carl Williams, Pennsylvania; Commander Paul J. (Jashel), Annapolis; Alton A. Stagg, Chicago; Frederick Moore, Harvard; Al Sharp, Yale, and W. H. Roper, Princeton.

Harry R. Coffin of Harvard '94, who has devoted a lot of time to some of the changes proposed, said that he believed that each period of the four should show forty plays or a total of 160 plays in all, came before the conference and read some very interesting statistics culled from the matches between Yale and Harvard

## Folwell May Coach Navy Football Men

Special to THE SUN AND NEW YORK HERALD.

ANNAPOLIS, Md., March 12.—The Executive Committee of the Naval Academy team for the coming season to Bob Folwell, late coach of the University of Pennsylvania. The vacancy was caused by the resignation of Gilmore Doble to accept the position of coach at Cornell.

Folwell was in Annapolis this week and talked the matter over with Commander D. L. Howard, athletic officer, and others connected with athletics, and stated the terms upon which he would come to the academy. The Executive Committee at its meeting this afternoon decided to offer him a contract upon the terms stated. Folwell made an excellent impression here and it is believed that he will be successful as the midshipmen's coach. There is general satisfaction over his selection.

and Princeton and Yale and other matches of less importance. He claims that the watch should not enter so much in the game and that the time out is only another method of "stalling." In his figures Mr. Coffin goes far to show that once any of the big colleges gain a lead it is next to an impossibility to beat them so perfect are the tactics now in use. At an early hour this morning the committee was still wrestling with the Coffin proposal and other knotty points of kicking, passing and so on.

### BOWLING IN BUFFALO.

Buffalo, N. Y., was awarded the 1921 tournament of the American Bowling Congress at its annual meeting of the delegates here to-day.

## GOLF FINAL WON BY HAROLD WEBER

Toledo Player Defeats H. P. Bingham at Palm Beach by 5 and 3.

Special to THE SUN AND NEW YORK HERALD. PALM BEACH, Fla., March 12.—H. P. Bingham of New York succumbed to Harold Weber of Toledo in today's final for the golf championship of Palm Beach. He played good golf and was outclassed. At the turn he was four down. Weber's medal score at this point was 32, and the match was over on the fifteenth.

The tournament will be notable here for its low scores, five men, Bingham, Weber, John Gammons, Wannamaker, J. S. Thompson, St. Paul, and Hugh J. Willoughby, Jr., Merion, having gone through at a golf ranging from 75 to 79 throughout the tourney.

Winners of all other divisions came through by wide margins. The summary: First Division—Final—Harold Weber, 32, defeated George Nickols, 34, 5 and 3.

Second Division—G. W. B. Bartlett, Hager Hill, defeated George Nickols, 34, 5 and 3.

Third Division—George E. Warren, Essex county, defeated W. J. Giddon, Willows, 5 and 4.

### PRIMAKOW LEADS AGAIN.

J. M. Primakow, the favorite for the title, last night took the lead in the metropolitan three cushion amateur billiard championship tournament when he defeated William Blumenthal, 50 to 28, in Thum's Academy. It was Primakow's fourth straight victory. The match lasted ninety-six minutes.

## N. Y. U. AND RUTGERS TO MEET IN FINAL

Will Play To-Day for National Basketball Title.

ATLANTA, Ga., March 12.—In the semi-final round of the National A. A. U. championship basketball tournament here to-night the quintet of the New York University defeated the Kansas City Athletic Club five by a score of 45 to 22. This was the third straight victory for the New York team.

The Eastern college teams, New York University and Rutgers College, will fight it out for the Amateur Athletic Union's national basketball championship here to-morrow. Rutgers won from the Young Men's Order of Detroit, 33 to 17.

### PENN SWIMMERS BEATEN.

Princeton Leads on Points and Also in Polo Match.

Special to THE SUN AND NEW YORK HERALD. PRINCETON, N. J., March 12.—Princeton defeated Penn at swimming here to-night, 33 to 29. The Tigers also won the water polo game, 54 to 7. Shields of Penn contributed the best individual performance, winning both the 50 yard race and the 220 yard event, beside swimming on the relay team. The summary:

50 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Johnson, Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 23.4 seconds.

100 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Leopold, Penn, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 50.1 seconds.

220 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Bringham, Penn, second; MacDonald, Princeton, third. Time, 2:04.3 seconds.

500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 11:05.5 seconds.

1000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 23:45.5 seconds.

1500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 35:15.5 seconds.

2000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 47:15.5 seconds.

2500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 59:15.5 seconds.

3000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 71:15.5 seconds.

3500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 83:15.5 seconds.

4000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 95:15.5 seconds.

4500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 107:15.5 seconds.

5000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 119:15.5 seconds.

5500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 131:15.5 seconds.

6000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 143:15.5 seconds.

6500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 155:15.5 seconds.

7000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 167:15.5 seconds.

7500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 179:15.5 seconds.

8000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 191:15.5 seconds.

8500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 203:15.5 seconds.

9000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 215:15.5 seconds.

9500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 227:15.5 seconds.

10000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 239:15.5 seconds.

10500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 251:15.5 seconds.

11000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 263:15.5 seconds.

11500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 275:15.5 seconds.

12000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 287:15.5 seconds.

12500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 299:15.5 seconds.

13000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 311:15.5 seconds.

13500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 323:15.5 seconds.

14000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 335:15.5 seconds.

14500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 347:15.5 seconds.

15000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 359:15.5 seconds.

15500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 371:15.5 seconds.

16000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 383:15.5 seconds.

16500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 395:15.5 seconds.

17000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 407:15.5 seconds.

17500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 419:15.5 seconds.

18000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 431:15.5 seconds.

18500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 443:15.5 seconds.

19000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 455:15.5 seconds.

19500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 467:15.5 seconds.

20000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 479:15.5 seconds.

20500 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 491:15.5 seconds.

21000 Yards—Shields, Penn, first; Princeton, second; Harris, Princeton, third. Time, 503:15.5 seconds.



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